

CHAPTER 6

NORMS AND VARIATIONS: A STUDY OF GHANAIAAN STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TO MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIVING (I)

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The use of samples of respondents from student populations and versions of what have elsewhere been termed "role conception inventories" for the documentation of prescriptions, attitudes and expectations regarding various aspects of conjugal and kin relationships have a relatively long and varied history in the field of family research (e.g. Motz, 1952).² Studies of student populations in Ghana, some of which have incorporated analyses of family and courtship experiences and expectations have included those of Jahoda (1954) Omari (1960 and 1962) and Peil (1965). Notable studies in other parts of Africa have been those of Goldthorpe in Makerere (1965) and Little in Freetown (1966).

Obviously students provide a readily available, almost captive population for such research purposes, data from whom may be used to test a number of hypotheses, since they are relatively homogeneous in a number of respects, such as age and educational level and yet often heterogeneous with respect to variables such as cultural and "social class" background and so on. At the same time marriage and family life lend themselves to enquiries concerning attitudes and expectations as they tend to be "norms with high crystallization and intensity for most behaviours that (family) members engage in The behavioural dimensions for which norms exist are numerous and cover a broad scope of activity" (Jackson 1966:119). Moreover though students have not yet usually attained the statuses of spouse and parent themselves, having been reared for the most part in family environments of one sort or another, they have already, through observation and personal involvement, acquired many sets of attitudes and expectations regarding what is appropriate or inappropriate behaviour for themselves and others in specific kinds of domestic situations, in the roles of husband, wife or parent. Furthermore in a context in which there is a tremendous amount of interest in the processes of social change and in the effects of levels and generations of education upon social life, a highly educated population may provide a neat laboratory for assessing the effects of such an independent variable and for measuring the extent and plotting the directions of change, especially when base-line data on the rural populations from which such samples come is available (Oppong, 1972b).

The project of which an aspect is discussed in this paper was carried out as an adjunct to a study of observed and reported conjugal behaviour in a sample of elite married couples in Accra, in which the husbands were Senior Civil Servants, many of them university graduates and with various kinds of professional training (see Oppong, 1974b). Informal interviews among the latter had revealed that individuals appeared to come to marriage with very different sets of attitudes and expectations regarding what behaviour is appropriate in the context of married life among the urban educated. People were well aware of this and referred to such differences in expectations,

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proposing that significant gaps in attitudes existed between men and women as husbands and wives, between members of different ethnic groups, between urban couples and their rural kin and between first, second and third generation educated members of the urban elite—a distinction being made between the newcomers to education and those of “good” families, who had been members of the educated “elite” for two or more generations.

The attitudes and expectations of the middle-aged however had obviously been affected by years of married life and parenthood. It was accordingly decided to select a younger sample, also of university educated people (since our concern was the educated “elite”) to test a number of hypotheses regarding variations in the norms associated with conjugal and kin relationships. In particular, since latent marital tension and even open conflict were observed in a number of homes, it was considered important to examine potential areas of differences in prescribed norms for domestic behaviour between men and women, and also areas in which individual norms were in conflict with each other. Furthermore, since tension, variation and conflict appeared widespread, it seemed of basic importance to examine in which domestic behaviour areas there was general consensus in different segments of the population—(say men or women) and which norms were strongly felt and in contrast those which aroused few intense feelings.

The Study

The particular sample selected for study was one of 830 undergraduates in the two coastal universities.³ As had been noted the focus of interest was their prescribed norms concerning conjugal and kinship role behaviour and the questionnaire distributed was planned such that the data collected comprised two sets of facts; the first included the independent variables considered, the background data about the students such as ethnic origins and parents' educational levels. The second set of data mainly comprised indications of agreement or disagreement with twenty-nine statements relating to such topics as family finances, decision-making, child-care and chore performance. The two main dimensions of opinion which were probed in this second section were: the extent to which husband and wife should act together *jointly* or alternately in carrying out a domestic task, enjoying a right or assuming a family responsibility and the extent to which a spouse should play aspects of conjugal and parental roles *vis-a-vis* individuals outside the conjugal family and vice versa. These two variables have been discussed in detail elsewhere under the labels *jointness/segregation* and *openness/closure* and the relevant literature cited (Oppong 1971).

The domestic variables

These two variables of conjugal and kin relationships have in fact, in one guise or another, been the frequent topic of discourse, speculation and observation about the changes taking place in urban family life in Africa and elsewhere (e.g. Goode 1963). The broad consensus is that in the “traditional” rural African context the division of labour between men and women in the home is strictly defined, economic activities being carefully segregated according to sex (e.g. Murdock 1966). Meanwhile the set of relatives concerned with the provision allocation and intergenerational transmission of domestic material resources and the joint holding of rights and duties with respect to rural minors is some kind of so-called “extended family,” which is frequently a segment of a unilineal descent group or a kindred. With regard to modern changes taking place, the trend of many opinions points towards the increasing emergences of the con-

jugal family as the functionally discrete domestic unit and a greater blurring of the differences between the conjugal rights and duties of husbands and wives, the major correlate of these changes being the frequent spatial separation of husbands, wife and children from most of their kin.

West African Urban "Elites"

Thinking specifically in terms of studies of West African urban "elites", we have been told that there are trends towards "equality" between spouses, towards "shared roles", while increasing levels and generation of education are noted to be correlated with a greater stress on the conjugal tie (Lloyd, 1966, 1967a & b). As Bird has phrased it in describing the educated Yoruba, "In the new system loyalty is to the conjugal bond" (1958:339). Again Marris has noted in a new Lagos suburb that some young husbands may even go so far as to help with the cleaning, washing and cooking and looking after children! (Marris 1961:54). Mills Odoi too has noted similar trends in Ga families—the emergence of the nuclear family as a residential unit and the increasing equality and companionship between spouses (1967:187).

Little and Omari have also referred to such trends in the attitudes and expectations of the unmarried. For instance Little has remarked that, "Like the British students the Africans (Sierra Leoneans) expect man and wife to co-operate on a companionate basis" (1966:160). However, a number of observers have warned that in this change process there may be considerable gaps in the views of men and women—one seizing upon new norms which are seen as being particularly beneficial to their sex, while eschewing those innovations which bring no personal reward. Goode (1963:19) has remarked that the conjugal family ideal may be more likely to appeal to women than to men. Little wonder too that Acquah and others have noted the retention of polygynous tendencies among educated men, while it is women not men who may be seeking a greater sharing of responsibilities for chores, child-care and so on! Indeed several observers have commended that while women may increasingly seek their material and emotional satisfactions in their statuses as wives, their husbands may tend to remain involved in close ties with consanguines (Lloyd 1966). Thus as Bird has noted the wife's desire for a more *joint* conjugal role relationship, than her husband may be prepared to accept, may be a potential source of conflict. In other words using the conceptual framework based upon substitution of domestic roles between husbands and wives and spouses and kin, we may simply state that observers have hitherto noted shifts in the *joint/closed* directions—some noting that women seem to be ahead of men in this shift, the assumption being that they have more to gain. We need to examine this proposition very carefully in the light of our data.

Figure I

CONJUGAL FAMILY ROLE SYSTEMS

Domestic Rights/Duties held Jointly

<i>By Spouse and Kin</i>	<i>By Husband and Wife</i>	
	Yes	No
Yes	A Open/ Joint	B Open/ Segregated
No	C Closed/ Joint	D Closed/ Segregated

→ = assumed direction of changes taking place in the family systems of African urban elites.

Norms and Roles:

Before proceeding to an analysis of our data however, we need to say a word more on the subject of norms and conjugal roles and how we intend to use the term. Norms have been described as "shared frames of reference which make communication possible" (Newcomb, 1950: 291); that is a body of shared anticipations based upon previous experience. They have also been defined as "an idea in the minds of members of a group, an idea that can be put in the form of a statement specifying what the member or other men should do . . . under given circumstances (Homans, 1951:23). Meanwhile a role may be viewed as a "whole set of behaviours which are more or less characteristic of all the occupants of any position" (Newcomb, 1950:330).

A number of attempts to describe and document the content of family roles and role norms have, as was noted at the beginning, used types of inventories—questionnaires aimed at constructing role descriptions from small behavioural units. Bates & Cloyd (1956) have claimed that such a method is "capable of reflecting any empirical patterning and offers the possibility of accumulating a series of role descriptions which will permit the validation of any consistent types of role which may appear." They rightly contend that "a list of behavioural traits from which role descriptions may be derived should be based on observations of the environment and culture of the group studied."

Furthermore what is important we may go on to think in terms of each norm as having an observable structure of its own and as generally incorporating an idea of evaluation, a norm that exists in a group involving "shared tendencies to approve or disapprove a particular dimension of behaviour (Jackson, 1966:113). Thus Jackson observes, "The evaluation of an act of behaviour can vary from strong approval to strong disapproval through some middle point of indifference. An evaluative dimension is thus an essential element of any scheme for describing norms" (Jackson, 1966:114).

Since one of our concerns here in examining the prescribed norms for family behaviour,—what people ought to do as husbands, wives and kin,—is to discover and demonstrate which sets of norms are strongly institutionalised, receiving universal approval, which are the potential subject of strain and conflict between men and women and which sets of norms conflict with each other, we are interested in the following attributes of the norms:—

1. **Congruence** — to what extent there are significant differences in the norms held by men and women.
2. **Intensity** — with which a particular norm is held by men or women.
3. **Consensus** — the extent to which men or women hold similar opinions (which may be intense or not).
4. **Integration** — the extent to which related norms fit logically together without contradiction; measured in terms of adherence to one norm's involving violation of another.

At the same time we intend to test the validity of the following hypotheses.

1. That women's prescribed norms for conjugal and kinship roles will differ significantly from those of men.
2. That where relevant women will show a significantly greater degree of approval of *jointness* and *closure* than men.

3. That where change is occurring with successive generations of education in either the male or female population it will be in the *joint/closed* direction.⁴

We may begin by grouping our statements into a number of related categories dealing with the following topics and examining them in turn; marriage type and purpose, partner choice, residential pattern, chore performance, financial provision, financial management, inheritance of property, child-care and decision-making. We may finally compare attitudes expressed in the several areas and discover those which appear to be most conflict-prone, stable or subject to change.

Marriage Type and Partner Choice:

One of the hallmarks of "elite" status is marriage under the Ordinance, registration of marriage being positively correlated with high levels of education both of husband and wife (Oppong, 1972). Most Ghanaian marriages however begin with the carrying out of the appropriate customary rites. The registration of marriage in many cases only follows after a lapse of time, some times even after the birth of children. It is widely attested that women rather than men press for registration of their marriages. Two facts are relevant here: one is that legally Ordinance marriage is monogamous and the other that the wife as well as the children are entitled to inherit a portion of the husband's property should he predecease them intestate. Both of these factors distinguish the wife's rights from those she acquires under customary marriage laws. It is thus not surprising that Table 1 (a) demonstrates educated women press strongly for the registration of marriage in contrast to men. Even though there is a marked shift in the men's attitudes correlated with successive generations of education, the difference between the responses of the men and the women remains significant (54 per cent of the first generation educated, 43 per cent of the second generation educated and only 38 per cent of the third generation educated are in absolute agreement that registration of a customary marriage is not necessary; $\chi^2 = 10.64$, $df = 4$; $P < .01$).

TABLE 1a

Response to the statement: "Once a couple has gone through the customary wedding rites there is no need to have the marriage registered as it is already a valid marriage." (Percentages)

	<i>Absolutely Agree</i>	<i>Partly Agree</i>	<i>Partly Disagree</i>	<i>Absolutely Disagree</i>	<i>N.R.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Men	46	24	12	18	(0)	100
Women	13	25	22	38	(2)	100

$\chi^2 = 83$; $df = 2$; $P < .001$

In this and all subsequent tables the total number of men is 604 and the total number of women is 231. For simplicity the percentages have all been expressed to the nearest unit. Where $P < .001$ the difference in the views of the men and women is accepted as being statistically significant. In most cases the χ^2 test was carried out on simplified tables of three columns and two rows ($df = 2$).

TABLE 1b

Responses to the statement: "Legally a man can only have one registered wife but she should accept the fact that he may decide to have one or more customary wives as well." (Percentages)

	<i>Absolutely Agree</i>	<i>Partly Agree</i>	<i>Partly Disagree</i>	<i>Absolutely Disagree</i>	<i>N.R.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Men	16	16	12	55	(1)	100
Women	9	8	12	69	(2)	100

$X^2 = 16.10$; $df = 2$; $P < .001$

Again in Table 1b we have quantitative evidence that it is women who most strongly disapprove of polygyny. Only just over half of the men and less than 70 per cent of the women condemn it absolutely. Thus while the difference between the two populations is statistically significant nearly 1 in 3 men and 3 out of 20 women agree that a "registered" wife should be prepared to accept co-wife. One in eight disagree but not wholeheartedly. The norm of monogamy is not strongly institutionalized nor is there apparently any significant shift in views among either the men or the women with successive generations of education.

In the matter of sexual faithfulness of the husband and the birth of "outside" children there is a marked lack of consensus among men and women and a perhaps surprising amount of "congruence." About half in both cases show varying degrees of approval and disapproval though the women again not unnaturally are slightly more inclined to support the wife's claim to divorce.

TABLE 1c

Responses to the statement: "A wife cannot expect her husband to be always faithful to her. She should not think of divorce just because he begets an outside child." (Percentages)

	<i>Absolutely Agree</i>	<i>Partly Agree</i>	<i>Partly Disagree</i>	<i>Absolutely Disagree</i>	<i>N.R.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Men	24	30	18	26	(1)	99
Women	19	29	18	31	(3)	100

No significant difference.

However there is a lack of intensity in this matter. The existence of "outside children" appears to be more tolerable than the existence of an "outside" wife! Once more there is no marked change in either the men's or the women's views with successive generations of education.

When we look at the statements regarding the underlying purpose of marriage, whether procreation or conjugal companionship, we find as others have found elsewhere, that men tend to emphasize the "traditional" "instrumental" aspect of marriage—the birth of children more than women, while women are significantly more inclined to state categorically that companionship between husband and wife is the most valuable (cf. Farber, 1957). However there is an overall high level of consensus on the question of the importance of conjugal companionship. Nor

are these views ones which are showing significant changes with successive generations of education, which supports the contention that conjugal companionship is a traditionally valued norm; contrary to the view widely held by outsiders that conjugal companionship is only something modern in West African marriage, which is appearing as a result of "western contact!" (See Table 1d & 1e).

TABLE 1d

Responses to the statement: "The main purpose of marriage is to have children." (Percentages)

	<i>Absolutely Agree</i>	<i>Partly Agree</i>	<i>Partly Disagree</i>	<i>Absolutely Disagree</i>	<i>N.R.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Men	12	34	18	33	(2)	99
Women	4	23	21	49	(4)	100

$$X^2 = 28.20; df = 2; P < .001$$

TABLE 1e

Responses to the statement: "Companionship between husband and wife is the most valuable thing marriage can offer." (Percentages)

	<i>Absolutely Agree</i>	<i>Partly Agree</i>	<i>Partly Disagree</i>	<i>Absolutely Disagree</i>	<i>N.R.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Men	75	19	2	2	(1)	99
Women	84	8	3	2	(0)	100

$$X^2 = 16.10; df = 2; P < .001$$

Partner choice is an area of behaviour in which change has frequently been stressed under modern urban conditions—both with regard to who should choose the spouses and who should be chosen. Here we see that there is congruence between the men's and women's views as to the role of parents, with just under half agreeing that it may be sometimes appropriate for parents to choose their child's marriage partner (see Table 1f). Feelings are not intense however and general consensus is lacking. Views are scarcely more definite with respect to the relevance of ethnic consideration. An important difference between the two issues is that while successive generations of education do not appear to be correlated with changing attitudes to the parents' role, they are correlated with significant changes in attitudes to the relevance of ethnicity, at least among the women ($\chi^2 = 14.11$, $df = 2$, $(P > .001)$).

TABLE 1f

Responses to the statement: "It may be appropriate sometimes for a person's parents to choose a suitable marriage partner for him/her." (Percentages)

	<i>Absolutely Agree</i>	<i>Partly Agree</i>	<i>Partly Disagree</i>	<i>Absolutely Disagree</i>	<i>N.R.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Men	8	38	14	38	(1)	99
Women	6	35	20	38	(0)	100

No significant difference

TABLE 1g

Responses to the statement: "It is important to choose a spouse from the same ethnic group as oneself." (Percentages)

	<i>Absolutely Agree</i>	<i>Partly Agree</i>	<i>Partly Disagree</i>	<i>Absolutely Disagree</i>	<i>N.R.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Women	12	26	18	42	(1)	99
Men	20	29	17	32	(1)	99

$$X^2 = 10.47; df = 2; P < .01$$

From the summary Table 1h it is apparent that the two issues on which women express a degree of consensus and intensity of feeling are those of monogamy (Table 1b) and the value of companionship in marriage (Table c). The men agree on the latter issue, but do not feel so strongly about the former. The two issues on which there is least agreement between men and women and the lowest consensus are the question of the registration of marriage (1a) and unfaithfulness and "outside" children (1c). The central role of children to the marriage is also a matter of differences in opinions between the sexes (1d). Thus on the above issues neither the men's nor the women's attitudes reach a generally high level of intensity and the level of consensus is on the whole low. Five out of the seven items are subject to statistically significant differences in the views of the two sexes.

TABLE 1h

Intensity, Consensus and Congruence of attitudes towards marriage type purpose and partner choice

<i>Item</i>	<i>Intensity (a)</i>						<i>Consensus (b)</i>				<i>(c) Congruence</i>	
	<i>Men Per Cent Mode PA + PD Level</i>			<i>Women Per Cent Mode PA + PA Level</i>			<i>Men Per Cent Level</i>		<i>Women Per Cent Level</i>			
1a	AA	36	Med.	AA	47	Med.	70	Med.	60	Low	P	.001
1b	AD	28	High	AD	20	High	67	Med.	81	High	P.	.001
1c	PA	48	Med.	AD	47	Med.	54	Low	49	Low	Congruent	
1d	PA	52	Low	AD	46	Med.	51	Low	72	Med.	P	.001
1e	AA	21	High	AA	11	High	94	High	92	High	P	.001
1f	PA/AD	52	Low	AD	55	Low	52	Low	58	Low	Congruent	
1g	AD	44	Med.	AD	46	Med.	60	Low	50	Low	P	.001

(a) **Intensity** is indicated by the position of the mode and the per cent of responses in partial agreement or partial disagreement.

Thus 50 per cent or more undecided intensity = low
 30 per cent—49 per cent undecided—intensity = medium
 0—29 per cent undecided—intensity = high

- (b) **Consensus** reckoned according to the percentage in absolute or partial disagreement or agreement (whichever is the larger) as follows:—
- 80 per cent—100 per cent = high consensus
 65 per cent— 79 per cent = medium consensus
 50 per cent— 65 per cent = low consensus
- (c) **Congruence** the attitudes of the men and women are considered to lack congruence, that is to be different (indicating an area of potential marital strain and tension), if there is a statistically significant difference between the two populations.
- Ambiguity**—where there is a bimodal distribution of attitudes this is considered to be an indication of norm ambiguity, the crystallization of different norms in subgroups of the population.

Residence

An important consideration for the urban educated couple is that of the composition of the household. There is widespread evidence that the urban “elite” of Accra and other West African towns house numbers of kin, especially junior relatives (e.g. Caldwell, 1968). What of views prior to marriage? Both men and women intensely approve of a couple living on their own—a significant departure from traditional residential patterns, according to which relatively few conjugal families live in residential isolation. (Indeed many husbands and wives live with consanguines rather than spouses—at least among the Akan and the Ga). The women however support the norm of residential isolation more than the men. But when responses are examined according to generations of education we find that there are important changes taking place in the men’s views; the proportion favouring residential isolation of the couple (i.e. the percentage in Absolute Agreement) increases successively from 27 per cent to 46 per cent to 51 per cent, until in the third generation their views are fairly similar to those of the women. (see Table 2a). When the type of coresident kin are specified as being of the senior generation, in fact the parents-in-law, both men and women express intense and equal agreement that this is a bad thing. They even agree that it is likely to spoil the marriage! (See Table 2b). There is substantial evidence that when educated salary-earners in Accra are housing kin, it is junior relatives, such as younger siblings and nephews and nieces and not their own parents or parents’ siblings, unless for some specific reason, such as the family crises occasioned by birth, sickness or death.

TABLE 2a

Responses to the statement: “After marriage a couple should live on their own with their children without the continual presence of other relatives in the house.”
(Percentages)

	<i>Absolutely Agree</i>	<i>Partly Agree</i>	<i>Partly Disagree</i>	<i>Absolutely Disagree</i>	<i>N.R.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Men	40	27	18	14	(1)	100
Women	54	28	10	6	(2)	100

$X^2 = 20.99$; $df = 2$; $P < .001$

TABLE 2b

Responses to the statement: "It is likely to spoil their marriage if a couple have their parents-in-law staying with them." (Percentages)

	<i>Absolutely Agree</i>	<i>Partly Agree</i>	<i>Partly Disagree</i>	<i>Absolutely Disagree</i>	<i>N.R.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Men	54	29	10	6	(1)	100
Women	55	29	8	7	(2)	101

No significant difference.

Obviously the new norm of residential isolation of the conjugal family is readily accepted by the highly educated. Any difficulties arising on this score are likely to be the result of outside pressures from kin and not differences in the attitudes of husbands and wives. These are only likely to differ in so far as it is their own kin or their in-laws who wish to live with them. Table 2(c) summarises the relatively high level of intensity and consensus found in this area.

TABLE 2c

Intensity, Consensus and Congruence of Attitudes towards the composition of the domestic group.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Intensity</i>						<i>Consensus</i>				<i>Congruence</i>
	<i>Men</i>			<i>Women</i>			<i>Men</i>		<i>Women</i>		<i>P</i>
	<i>Mode</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Mode</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Per- cent</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Per- cent</i>	<i>Level</i>	
	<i>PA + PD</i>			<i>PA + PD</i>							
2a	AA	39	Med.	AA	37	Med.	83	High	84	High	$P < .001$
2b	AA	45	Med.	AA	38	Med.	67	Med.	82	High	Congruent

Household Chores

Responses to three statements about the performance of household tasks were collected. The first echoes the "traditional" norm that household chores are women's work. (Table 3a). Not unnaturally more men than women support this view. However the "modern" norm regarding the sharing of chores, that is if both husband and wife are working outside the home they should share the responsibility for chores—gets considerable support from the men and the women. (Table 3b). The difference in attitudes on these two issues however is significant. At the same time almost a third of both men and women think that an educated woman's junior kin or maids should help with routine chores—a common pattern in elite households (Tables 3c). Thus there is some conflict of attitudes regarding the distribution of responsibilities between husband and wife, but agreement that responsibilities should be shared to some extent and considerable acceptance of the norm of delegation of tasks in this area. (see Table 3d).

TABLE 3a

Responses to the statement: "In general men should leave the housework to women." (Percentages)

	<i>Absolutely Agree</i>	<i>Partly Agree</i>	<i>Partly Disagree</i>	<i>Absolutely Disagree</i>	<i>N.R.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Men	21	38	24	15	(1)	99
Women	14	29	25	26	(6)	100

$\chi^2 = 12.47$, $df = 2$; $P < .01$.

TABLE 3b

Responses to the statement: "Husband and Wife should share the responsibility for housework if both outside the home." (Percentages)

	<i>Absolutely Agree</i>	<i>Partly Agree</i>	<i>Partly Disagree</i>	<i>Absolutely Disagree</i>	<i>N.R.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Men	42	39	10	8	—	99
Women	52	27	13	5	(3)	100

$\chi^2 = 9.35$; $df = 2$, $P < .01$

TABLE 3c

Responses to the statement: "An educated woman should be able to leave most of her routine household tasks for younger female relatives and maids to do for her." (Percentages)

	<i>Absolutely Agree</i>	<i>Partly Agree</i>	<i>Partly Disagree</i>	<i>Absolutely Disagree</i>	<i>N.R.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Men	7	26	29	37	(1)	100
Women	7	23	32	36	(2)	100

No significant difference.

If we compare these findings with observations and reports of actual behaviour with respect to chore performance in households of educated couples in Accra, we find that, frequently men are sharing a certain amount of responsibility for specific tasks such as shopping. Although some wives are regretful that they do not get more help, women tend to accept the major responsibility in this area and to manage without too much strain, providing that they have adequate outside help of several kinds. In no cases observed was the division of household labour between spouses found to be a major source of domestic conflict, though sometimes a source of latent tension and strain (Oppong, 1974b:109-112). This is an area of domestic behaviour however in which we may expect conflict to increase as domestic help becomes increasingly difficult to obtain and as educated wives still continue to expect to play full-time roles as workers outside the home.

TABLE 3d

Intensity Consensus and Congruence of Attitudes towards household chore performance.

<i>Intensity</i>							<i>Consensus</i>				<i>Congruence</i>
<i>Item</i>	<i>Men</i>			<i>Women</i>			<i>Men</i>		<i>Women</i>		
	<i>Mode</i>	<i>PA</i>	<i>+ PD</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Mode</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Per-</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Per-</i>	<i>Level</i>	
					<i>PA + PD</i>		<i>cent</i>		<i>cent</i>		
3a	RA	62	Low	PA	54	Low	59	Low	51	Low	P < .01
3b	AA	49	Med.	AA	40	Med.	81	High	79	Med.	P < .01
3c	AD	55	Low	AD	55	Low	66	Med.	68	Med.	Congruent

Financial Provision

The responsibility for financial provision for domestic needs is one that has been traditionally shared between husband and wife, especially in the southern half of Ghana, from which the large majority of the population under study originates. Women have long played vital roles in food production, trade and more recently wage labour. Thus it is not surprising, nor it is the result of new or modern trends, to find intense agreement and consensus over the married women's duty of helping to earn the family living (Table 4a). There is also agreement between men and women regarding the husband's role in financial provision (Table 4b). Less than 40 per cent are in complete agreement that earning the living is mainly the husband's duty. Changes correlated with generations of education are not significant.

TABLE 4a

Responses to the statement: "A married woman has the duty of helping her husband to earn a living for the family." (Percentages)

	<i>Absolutely Agree</i>	<i>Partly Agree</i>	<i>Partly Disagree</i>	<i>Absolutely Disagree</i>	<i>N.R.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Men	75	19	3	2	—	99
Women	69	23	4	3	(1)	100

No significant difference

TABLE 4b

Responses to the statement: "It is mainly the duty of the husband to be responsible for earning the living of the family." (Percentages)

	<i>Absolutely Agree</i>	<i>Partly Agree</i>	<i>Partly Disagree</i>	<i>Absolutely Disagree</i>	<i>N.R.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Men	39	35	12	12	(1)	99
Women	35	31	18	14	(1)	100

No significant difference

Again when we consider the degrees of approval of *closure* of the conjugal family with respect to financial provision men's and women's attitudes concur. Fewer than half absolutely agree that a man's sole continuing financial responsibility is to his conjugal family (Table 4c). More than half recognise that relatives expect and may be considered to deserve more than sporadic financial help. In other words there is widespread recognition that responsibilities for financial provision are often likely to include a group wider than the conjugal family. Once more these views are not changing with successive generations of education. Thus in the matter of financial provision there appears to be a relatively high degree of consensus, congruence and intensity in the views of men and women. (See Table 4d).

TABLE 4c

Responses to the statement: "A man's sole continuing financial responsibility is to his wife and children, his relatives should not expect to get anything more than occasional gifts and help from him." (Percentages)

	<i>Absolutely Agree</i>	<i>Partly Agree</i>	<i>Partly Disagree</i>	<i>Absolutely Disagree</i>	<i>N.R.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Men	49	26	14	9	(1)	99
Women	44	27	16	13	—	100

No significant difference

TABLE 4d

Intensity, Consensus and Congruence of Attitudes towards financial provision

<i>Intensity</i>							<i>Consensus</i>				<i>Congruence</i>	
<i>Item</i>												
	<i>Men</i>				<i>Women</i>			<i>Men</i>		<i>Women</i>		
<i>Mode</i>	<i>Per cent</i>		<i>Level</i>	<i>Mode</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Per-</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Per-</i>	<i>Level</i>		
	<i>PA + PD</i>				<i>PA + PD</i>			<i>cent</i>		<i>cent</i>		
4a	AA	22	High	AA	27	High	94	High	92	High	Congruent	
4b	AA	47	Med.	AA	49	Med.	74	Med.	66	Med.	Congruent	
4c	AA	40	Med.	AA	43	Med.	75	Med.	71	Med.	Congruent	

The prescribed norms are seen to be reflected in actual practices observed. For among the educated couples whose budgeting behaviour has been described elsewhere, we have shown that financial provision is generally *joint* between husband and wife and also demonstrated that acceptance of financial responsibilities to kin outside the conjugal family is almost universal.

Financial Management

In considering norms for financial management, as opposed to provision, the picture is somewhat different for conflict is a prominent feature. Though once more they conform to widespread customs.

Although some lip-service is paid to the “modern” norm that couples should have joint savings and decide about money together (a norm incidentally encouraged by Christian Marriage Counsellors)—yet there are significant levels of disagreement between men and women as to the appropriate financial activities of either spouse—that is whether the wife should earn and save her own income and whether the husband should be in charge of the household financial affairs. (see Tables 5a b c d & e).

TABLE 5a

Responses to the statement: “It is a good idea for a couple to keep a joint savings account and to decide together what they will do with their money.” (Percentage)

	<i>Absolutely Agree</i>	<i>Partly Agree</i>	<i>Partly Disagree</i>	<i>Absolutely Disagree</i>	<i>N.R.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Men	39	29	14	18	(1)	101
Women	32	29	16	21	(2)	100

No significant difference

TABLE 5b

Responses to the statement: “A woman should not rely upon her husband for financial security however rich he is. She should try to earn and save an income of her own.” (Percentages)

	<i>Absolutely Agree</i>	<i>Partly Agree</i>	<i>Partly Disagree</i>	<i>Absolutely Disagree</i>	<i>N.R.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Men	28	36	20	15	(2)	101
Women	48	27	15	8	(2)	101

$X^2 = 31.17$; $df = 2$; $P < .001$

TABLE 5c

Responses to the statement: “It is sensible for the working wife to keep her salary separate from that of her husband and to spend it as she thinks best.” (Percentages)

	<i>Absolutely Agree</i>	<i>Partly Agree</i>	<i>Partly Disagree</i>	<i>Absolutely Disagree</i>	<i>N.R.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Men	7	20	23	49	(0)	99
Women	22	22	26	28	(2)	100

$X^2 = 32.37$; $df = 2$; $P < .001$

TABLE 5d

Responses to the statement: "The wife should leave management of financial affairs to the husband." (Percentages)

	<i>Absolutely Agree</i>	<i>Partly Agree</i>	<i>Partly Disagree</i>	<i>Absolutely Disagree</i>	<i>N.R.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Men	15	28	28	26	(2)	99
Women	3	23	21	48	(5)	100

$\chi^2 = 39.14$; $df = 2$; $P < .001$

TABLE 5e

Intensity Consensus and Congruence of Attitudes towards management of domestic finances.

<i>Item</i>		<i>Intensity</i>					<i>Consensus</i>				<i>Congruence</i>
<i>Men</i>			<i>Women</i>			<i>Men</i>		<i>Women</i>			
<i>Mode</i>	<i>PA + PD</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Mode</i>	<i>Per Cent</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Per Cent</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Per Cent</i>	<i>Level</i>		
5a	AA	43	Med.	AA	45	Med.	68	Med.	61	Med.	Congruent
5b	AD	56	Low	AA	42	Med.	64	Low	75	Med.	P < .001
5c	AD	43	Med.	AD	48	Med.	72	Med.	54	Low	P < .001
5d	PA/PD	56	Low	AD	45	Med.	54	Low	69	Med.	P < .001

There is norm conflict of various kinds. There is lack of *congruence* in the opinions of men and women. There is lack of *consensus* among men and among women. There is also lack of *integration* of the several norms—support for *jointness* is not matched by disapproval of *segregation*. We may thus predict that this major area of financial management is likely to be one in which there will be considerable conflict, strain and fairly wide differences in attitudes and behaviour, both between husbands and wives and between couples. These observations are supported by data on actual "elite" budgeting arrangements—the variations and the prevalent conflict. (Oppong, 1974 a). In fact the management of financial resources appeared to be the biggest bone of domestic contention in a number of family case studies collected and the behaviour area most subject to instability and change over a period of time. In addition gaps were often observed between aspirations and practices both regarding financial *jointness* and *segregation* and *closure* and *openness*. As I have indicated elsewhere the prevalent *segregation* and *openness* may be seen as a direct continuation of traditional norms and behaviour patterns (Oppong, 1972c) and in part links to our next topic which is inheritance.

Inheritance

That inheritance should figure prominently in a conjugal norm inventory in Ghana is only proper, as anyone conversant with the culture will understand! It was included after being mentioned by women students as a primary concern when they were considering the attributes

of potential marriage partners. It is a well known fact that the plight of the urban widow and her children; unprotected by modern wills and insurance policies and left to the kind of maintenance apportioned to her under customary law, may be a sorry one.

The educated man and woman agree as we have seen that they should live together and alone with their children and that they should co-operate in providing for their combined material needs. They both expect to be in salaried employment, the recipients of individually earned incomes. What then of the money, household goods, perhaps a house and so on which they acquire during the course of their marriage together, while they live in one household supporting each other? Should such household effects and properties belong to the surviving partner and children of the marriage at the decease of one partner intestate or should such properties pass to the "family" which may mean lineage segment or offspring to the exclusion of wife and so on? And perhaps we may point out here that this money and goods and perhaps a building may be crucial to the maintenance of the living and educational standard to which the bereaved have become accustomed. They may not necessarily have any other equivalent source of support or suitable home to go to.

TABLE 6a

Responses to the statement: "It is not right for a man to leave the bulk of his property to his wife and children alone." (Percentages)

	<i>Absolutely Agree</i>	<i>Partly Agree</i>	<i>Partly Disagree</i>	<i>Absolutely Agree</i>	<i>N.R.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Men	25	32	16	27	(0)	100
Women	6	22	20	49	(3)	100

$$X^2 = 55.08; df = 2; P < .001$$

TABLE 6b

Responses to the statement: "If a man dies without making a will most of his property should go to his relatives who should see to it that his wife and children are provided for." (Percentages)

	<i>Absolutely Agree</i>	<i>Partly Agree</i>	<i>Partly Disagree</i>	<i>Absolutely Disagree</i>	<i>N.R.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Men	15	20	16	49	(0)	100
Women	5	6	11	76	(1)	99

$$X^2 = 53.87; d = 2; P < .001$$

We have two statements here to elicit view points each stating the opposite of the other. First of all a highly significant difference is apparent in the views of the men and the women. (See Tables 6a & b). In each case the men are more inclined than the women to support the view that kin should inherit a dead man's property. To women's views are in addition more intense and reach a higher level of consensus than those of the men. (See Table 6c). The significant lack

of congruence indicates a matter of real conflict of opinions. (Unfortunately we did not include statements in which the deceased referred to was a female). However this is also an issue on which there is significant change taking place in norms. The shifts in the men's views towards approval of *closure*—there is increasing concern for the inheritance rights of the wife and children—are correlated with successive generations of education. In reply to the statement that it is not right for a man to leave the bulk of his property to his wife and children alone 30 per cent of first generation educated men were in Absolute Disagreement 26 per cent of second generation educated men and 17 per cent of the third generation educated ($\chi^2 = 15.46$, $df = 4$, $P < .01$). However the difference in the views of the men and women still remained significant when the education and change were taken into account.

TABLE 6c

Intensity, Consensus and Congruence of Attitudes Towards Inheritance Norms

Item		Intensity						Consensus				Congruence			
		Men			Women			Men		Women					
		Per cent			Per cent			Per		Per					
		Mode	PA	+ PD	Level	Mode	PA	+ PD	Level	cent	Level	cent	Level		
6a	PA	48	Med.	AD	40	Med.				57	Low	69	Med.	P	.001
6b	AD	36	Med.	AD	17	High				65	Med.	87	High	P	.001

TABLE 7a

Responses to the statement: "In general women ought to stay at home and care for the children." (Percentages)

	Absolutely Agree	Partly Agree	Partly Disagree	Absolutely Disagree	N.R.	Total
Men	22	49	18	10	(1)	100
Women	20	47	17	12	(4)	100

No significant difference

Child Care

If we take the next two aspects of child-care, the mother's primary responsibility and the extent to which the kin group more inclusive than the conjugal family should play a part, we see that there is relatively little conflict in the views of the men and women (See Table 7 a,b,c & d). The *intensity* with which opinions are held is consistently low and *consensus* is not high. Obviously there is much variety in individuals views about these aspects of child-care and most views are not strongly held.

Table 7a shows that the idea that the woman's place is in the home is not widespread. This is not a radical departure from the customary norm however, since most women in southern Ghana spend a considerable amount of their time earning an income outside the home, either by farming or trading. The customary assumption that women will spend some time gainfully

TABLE 7b

Responses to the statement: "A married woman should be able to stay at home while her children are under school age." (Percentages)

	<i>Absolutely Agree</i>	<i>Partly Agree</i>	<i>Partly Disagree</i>	<i>Absolutely Disagree</i>	<i>N.R.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Men	38	37	17	6	(2)	100
Women	33	44	13	8	(2)	100

No significant difference

TABLE 7c

Responses to the statement: "It is often beneficial for children of needy parents to be reared by other relatives as they may provide a better home environment for the child." (Percentages)

	<i>Absolutely Agree</i>	<i>Partly Agree</i>	<i>Partly Disagree</i>	<i>Absolutely Disagree</i>	<i>N.R.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Men	34	40	14	11	(1)	100
Women	26	38	17	16	(3)	100

No significant difference

TABLE 7d

Responses to the statement: "A person should only be expected to educate his/her own children." (Percentages)

	<i>Absolutely Agree</i>	<i>Partly Agree</i>	<i>Partly Disagree</i>	<i>Absolutely Disagree</i>	<i>N.R.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Men	29	28	20	22	(1)	100
Women	28	30	30	10	(2)	100

$X^2 = 20.06$; $df = 3$; $P < .001$

employed outside the home would also seem to be expressed in the pattern of responses found in Table 7b in which only just over one-third feel strongly that a mother of preschool age children should be able to stay at home with them. The customary norm of finding a substitute for the mother during her frequent absences remains widely accepted. In addition those who strongly feel that a person should only be expected to educate his own children are in a minority Table 7b).

In the parallel study of couples and their children, differences of opinion between husbands and wives over child-rearing methods were not observed to cause open conflicts. But frequent references to the varying practices of significant others, such as kin, in-laws, neighbours, members of other ethnic groups and so on, made it clear that the actors were well aware that there is considerable variation in this area of family behaviour.

TABLE 7c

Intensity, Consensus and Congruence of Attitudes towards child-rearing practices

Intensity							Consensus				Congruence	
Men				Women			Men		Women			
%				%			%		%			
Mode	PA	+ PD	Level	Mode	PA	+ PD	Level	Level	Level			
7a	PA	67	Low	PA	64	Low		71	Med.	67	Med.	congruent
7b	PA	56	Low	PA	57	Low		75	Med.	77	Med.	congruent
7c	PA	54	Low	PA	55	Low		74	Med.	64	Low	congruent
7d	PA	48	Med.	PA/PD	60	Low		57	Low	58	Low	P < .001

Decision-Making

The decision-making process is a crucial area of family life, involving both the question of who are the decision-makers, for various types of activities and the kinds of decisions they make. Who makes the major decisions in the domestic setting has frequently been seen to be a function of the power structure, which is itself affected by the access to and control over strategic domestic resources (Oppong 1970). The women's work role outside the home has often been shown to enhance her say in domestic decision-making. Women traditionally have played and continue to play and expect to play an important role in the economy of southern Ghana. It is therefore not surprising that in the population under study there is a widespread support for the norm of equality in decision-making between husband and wife. There is however a wide gap in the normative prescriptions of the sexes—the women's notions regarding the equality of women being characterised by very high intensity,—a difference which remains significant even when the shift in the men's opinions, correlated with successive generations of education is taken into account. (See Table 8a). On the other hand husband-dominance is not a widely accepted norm, even among the men. (Table 8b) there is a lack of *intensity consensus* and *congruence* in views about the guiding role of elderly relatives (Table 8c). The locus of domestic authority is obviously subject to serious question and conflict in the population surveyed. (Table 8d). The only significant change noted is towards the increasing recognition of the wife's equal role in domestic decision-making by the men ($\chi^2=11.32$, $df=2$, $p<.01$).

TABLE 8a

Responses to the question: "In the household the husband and wife ought to have an equal say in making important decisions and should reach them by joint discussion." (Percentages)

	Absolutely Agree	Partly Agree	Partly Disagree	Absolutely Disagree	N.R.	Total
Men	67	29	2	1	(1)	100
Women	90	6	0	0	(3)	99

$\chi^2 = 56.45$; $df = 1$; $P < .001$

TABLE 8b

Responses to the question: "The Husband should decide the important matters in the household." (Percentages)

	<i>Absolutely Agree</i>	<i>Partly Agree</i>	<i>Partly Disagree</i>	<i>Absolutely Disagree</i>	<i>N.R.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Men	23	35	18	23	(1)	100
Women	10	22	19	45	(3)	99

$X^2 = 51.8$; $df = 2$; $P < .001$

TABLE 8c

Responses to the statement: "A young couple should be guided by their elderly relatives when making important decisions." (Percentages)

	<i>Absolutely Agree</i>	<i>Partly Agree</i>	<i>Partly Disagree</i>	<i>Absolutely Disagree</i>	<i>N.R.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Men	26	39	12	21	(2)	100
Women	13	38	19	28	(3)	100

$X^2 = 20.54$; $df = 2$; $P < .001$

TABLE 8d

Intensity, Consensus and Congruence of Attitudes toward modes of decision-making.

<i>Item</i>							<i>Intensity</i>				<i>Consensus</i>				<i>Congruence</i>
							<i>Men</i>				<i>Women</i>				
							<i>%</i>				<i>%</i>				
							<i>Mode PA + PD Level</i>				<i>Mode PA + PD Level</i>				
							<i>% Level</i>				<i>% Level</i>				
8a	AA	31	Med.	AA	10	High	96	High	96	High	P < .001				
8b	PA	53	Low	AD	41	Med.	58	Low	64	Low	P < .001				
8c	PA	51	Low	PA	57	Low	65	Med.	51	Low	P < .001				

Institutionalization of Norms

We may now turn to a major question of interest that is the extent to which the various prescribed norms for conjugal and kinship roles examined are *institutionalized*, measured in terms of the degree of *intensity* with which they are held, and the extent of *consensus* of views. To give an indication of these we may select the statements for which the responses show **HIGH intensity** and *consensus*. The results are illuminating for we discover that only *one* prescribed norm out of all those examined is intensely held by men and women,—showing high measures for *intensity* and *consensus* and no significant difference between the views of the sexes. That is

the statement that, "A married women has the duty of helping her husband to earn a living for the family." (4a). This then is the only issue, of those we have looked at, upon which we can expect highly educated men and women to agree with equal degrees of enthusiasm! (See Table 9)*.

Table 9

Areas of potential Marital Conflict and Strain

ITEM SUBJECT							CHANGE	
							Men	Women
I	1a	Registration of marriage	...	...	...	...	83.39	+
	8a	Joint decision-making	...	...	...	...	54.45	—
	8b	Husband main decision-maker	...	...	...	...	51.8	—
	6a	Inheritance (Conjugal family)	...	...	...	...	55.08	+
	6b	Inheritance (Conjugal family)	...	...	...	...	53.87	+
	5d	Husband manage finances	...	...	...	...	39.14	—
	5b	Wife earn/save own money	...	...	...	...	31.17	—
	5c	Wife keep salary	...	...	...	...	32.37	+
	1d	Purpose of marriage procreation	...	...	...	...	28.20	—
	2a	Couple live alone	...	...	...	...	20.99	+
	8c	Guidance from kin	...	...	...	...	20.54	—
	1b	Polygamy/Monogamy	...	...	...	...	16.10	—
	1e	Companionship	...	...	...	...	16.10	—
II	3a	Housework for women	...	...	...	...	12.47	—
	3b	Share chores	...	...	...	...	9.35	+
	1g	Partner choice (ethnicity)	...	...	...	...	10.47	—
	7c	Rearing by kin	...	...	...	...	8.96	—
III		If partner choice (parents)	...	...	...	...	4.69	—
	4b	Earning husband's resp.	...	...	...	...	4.47	+
7b	4c	Mother at home	...	...	...	...	3.96	+
	4c	Man's resp. wife/children	...	...	...	...	3.64	—
	5a	Joint savings	...	...	...	...	3.28	+
	2b	No resident pp in law	...	...	...	...	1.09	+
	1c	Outside child/divorce	...	...	...	...	2.33	—
	3c	Chores — relatives/maids	...	...	...	...	.69	—
	7a	Women care for children	...	...	...	...	.68	+
	7d	Should rear own children	...	...	...	...	.28	—

- + Changes in norms observed correlated with increasing generations of education
 — No significant change observed to be correlated with generations of education,
 I, The difference between the norms of the men and women is highly significant $p < .001$
 II, The difference between the norms of the men and women is significant $P < .01$
 III, There is no significant difference in the norms of the men and women,

The other norm for which there is high intensity and consensus is the importance of companionship in marriage. But here the women's views are significantly more intense than those of the men.** In three other areas women reach consistently high levels of *intensity* and *consensus* that is on the questions of *monogamy*, *conjugal equality* and *the conjugal family as the*

inheritance unit, but the views of the men vary in *intensity* and *consensus* between high and medium and in each case the difference between the views of the two sexes is statistically significant.

Hypothesis I: Sexual Conflict

Finally we come to an examination of our original hypotheses—first that the women's prescribed norms for conjugal and kinship roles will differ significantly from those of the men. Sixteen out of the twenty-eight statements support the hypothesis that the men's and women's views will show significant differences. (See Table 9). However their agreement on a number of important issues indicates quite clearly that each norm needs to be examined separately and that such norms can virtually be ranked upon a continuum ranging from maximum conflict to perfect congruence between men's and women's views. What is instructive is to see where any particular item falls on this continuum.

The matter involving the most marked difference of views between men and women is that of the registration of marriage. Once married in one way or another we see that the main issues for disagreement are likely to be *power* and *money*! Who should make the household decisions—the husband and wife together or the husband alone. Data from couples already married would seem to suggest that a partial solution to the problem of power and decision-making for some couples is found if a partly *autonomous* pattern is evolved, the husband making some decisions and the wife making others. Otherwise the wife's level of education and earning capacity are likely to be associated with either a relatively *syncratic* or *autocratic* pattern (Oppong, 1974b: 115ff).

Inheritance and the management of finances are the next to figure prominently in this ranked list of potential areas of marital strain. As we have already remarked these major issues appear to be areas of tension, even open conflict and domestic hostility among elite married couples and their kin. Two basic questions are involved—the financial autonomy of the individual salary-earning partner *vis à vis* his or her spouse and the financial autonomy of the conjugal family *vis à vis* the kin of both partners. Residential separation, even where it occurs, does not necessarily spell financial separation. Women are obviously particularly conscious that, to maintain the new elite urban, living and educational standards to which they aspire for themselves and their children, the conjugal family must become an increasingly *closed* group, especially as regards the passing on of property from one generation to the next. Regarding the marriage relationship itself the men are seen to be generally more conservative than the women, concerned more with the procreative aspect of marriage than women and showing less disapproval of such traditional traits as being guided by kin and polygyny.

Chores are seen to fall in the middle of the range—a source of conflict of attitudes but not the most crucial. The "*congruent-norms*" include those concerning the husband's financial responsibilities and the mother's child-care role. Significantly these norms unmarked by conflict are also mainly the ones of relatively low/medium *intensity* and *consensus*. Issues on which opinions are *intensely* held and there is widespread agreement are all except one simultaneously conflict issues.

Hypothesis II: Approval of Jointness and Closure

The second hypothesis for consideration is that women tend to favour *jointness* in conjugal relationships more than men and to favour more the *closed* (functionally individuated) conjugal family ideal.

Table 9 demonstrates effectively that when we look at a number of issues separately we see that there are indeed some in which women favour *joint* performance more than men and these include decision-making and control of domestic resources. (They naturally do not think that the husband should be dominant or manage the financial affairs of the household!) They are also naturally more prone than the men to consider that husbands should take on a share of the housework!

On the other hand there are no significant differences regarding approval of *jointness* observable in the matters of financial provision, child-care and saving. Meanwhile as regards saving and spending the wife's earnings there is a significant negative correlation—that is men not women favour *jointness* in this area. Women approve of *segregation* of interests when their own property is concerned! Such data indicate that analysis of small behavioural items in terms of this dimension of *jointness* may be quite revealing.

In the matter of *closure*, when women feel strongly that their rights are at stake, they favour *closure* (the restricting of the rights of outsiders) more than men; that is for instance regarding the rights of other women as co-wives and the rights of kin to inherit property and to give advice.

On some issues where they stand to benefit—that is in the sharing of domestic *responsibilities* with people outside the conjugal family—women do not approve of *closure* more than men. Thus there is no significant difference in their views on rearing of children by kin (7c) and the delegation of chores to relatives and maids (3c). In other cases they appear to partly accept the current norms of relative *openness* even though they may be detrimental to their own position (4c, 1c).

Thus detailed examination of data shows clearly that we cannot accept the hypothesis as it stands. Women do not always approve of conjugal *jointness* and the functional individuation of the conjugal family more than men. The extent of their approval appears to be at least partly related to the benefits likely to accrue to them from the particular pattern of behaviour.

Hypothesis III: Education and Change

The last hypothesis for consideration is that where normative change is occurring it will be in the direction of increasing approval of *jointness* and *closure*. As Table 9 indicates the norms most prone to change consequent upon successive generations of education are those simultaneously subject to conflicts in attitudes between men and women. In fact only three issues concerned with either degrees of *jointness* or *closure* are subject to statistically significant changes of this kind. These involve joint decision-making, inheritance by the conjugal family or other kin and residential isolation. In these three matters the views of the men show highly significant changes in the *joint/closed* directions correlated with successive generations of education. Change where it occurs on a large scale is in the expected direction. The other two important areas in which marked changes are noticeable among both men and women are in the matters of partner choice (the relevance of ethnicity) and registration of marriage. No cases of significant changes in the *segregated/open* direction were observed to be correlated with increasing generations of education.

Conclusion

In this paper data from a sample of Ghanaian university students has been collected with a view to documenting some prescribed norms for conjugal relationships and to examining the

general extent to which conjugal norms are "institutionalized" in the population surveyed or subject to conflict of various kinds and at the same time to testing a number of hypotheses related to patterns of normative conflict and directions and correlates of change. A kind of "conjugal role inventory" was used to elicit data on norms—a battery of descriptions of small items of conjugal behaviour. Three aspects of the structure of norms—their *congruence*, *intensity* and level of *consensus*—were measured and compared.

The effects of two independent variables upon the prescribed norms were examined—one being sex, the other generation—educated. The two dimensions of conjugal relationships discussed were *jointness*—the extent to which husband and wife should act together, jointly or alternately in carrying out a particular domestic task enjoying a right or assuming a domestic responsibility and the extent to which the conjugal family should be *closed*, that is functionally discrete with respect to a particular type of activity.

Three hypotheses current in much of the literature in studies of changing family life among West African urban elites were tested, including propositions about shifts towards *jointness* and *closure* and the gap in expectations between men and women.

Our findings were several and I suggest interesting. We saw that, in terms of the aspects of norm structure measured, only one norm could be labelled as being highly institutionalised in the total university population. The remainder were subject either to lack of *congruence* between men and women, to lack of *consensus* between men or women or to a general lack of intensity of feeling. More than half of the normative statements elicited significantly different responses from the men and the women, major issues of difference being type of marriage contract, power and property. Regarding the presumed predilection for conjugal *jointness* and *closure* of the women—this was not found to be always in evidence, but to depend upon the nature of the activities concerned. Where relevant it was demonstrated that, in those areas in which significant changes were observed to be taking place correlated with successive generations of education they were in the *joint/closed* direction.

Once more we have sought to show that, by the collection and analysis of detailed items of family data, we are able to plot interesting aspect of both the cultural and social structure of the family relationships of a select Ghanaian population and to indicate areas of conflict and directions of change.

NOTES

- (1) The data discussed in this paper were collected in the course of a "modern marriage" field-work project carried out in 1967-8 mainly in the Accra District. The work was jointly sponsored by the Institute of African Studies, Legon and the Department of Social Anthropology, Edinburgh University. The total cross-cultural project of which this formed one part was directed by Professor K. Little. Thanks are also due to Dr M. Peil, Mr Joe Boateng and Mr Ampom Darkwah, who in their several ways helped in the processes of data collection and analysis.
- (2) Motz set out to find out how 674 married students at Indiana in 1948-9 defined marital roles. The first step was to determine the ideal types of role definition held by the couples and then to use 24 statements referring to six areas of behaviour. These were scored on a continuum purporting to measure degrees of approval of "traditional" or "companionate" conjugal/roles.

The Sample

- (3) The student sample was chosen from the university populations including Legon, the University of Ghana which in 1968 had 1746 men and 243 women and the University of Cape Coast, which then had 951 men and 115 women. One in four male Ghanaian undergraduates (registered to do degree courses) were selected from alphabetical lists of residents in all the University halls. The first on each was picked at random. All female Ghanaian undergraduates were selected since the total population was relatively small.

University Student Sample

	<i>Total Population</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>No. Delivered</i>	<i>No. Returned</i>	<i>Response</i>
Women	359	Total	273	231	83 per cent
Men (Legon)	1746	1/4	452	390	86 per cent
Men (U.C.C.C.)	951	1/4	245	209	85 per cent
Total	3056		970	830	85 per cent

The questionnaires were delivered together with explanatory letters and were later collected by students employed for the purpose. Anonymity of respondents was ensured. The main reason given for non-return was pressure of work. The distribution and collection was carried out during the Easter Term of 1968. About sixty per cent of the men and women in the sample were Akan. The remainder were mainly Ga and Ewe. There was a striking difference between the men and women in terms of education received by parents and grandparents. The men were divided into three fairly equal groups of first generation-educated, second generation-educated and third generation-educated (the last being the smallest group). Scarcely any women however were first generation-educated. Just under two in three were third generation-educated, leaving nearly one in three in the middle category of second generation educated. (When the family norms of the female population were examined in relation to educational background the first and second categories were added together).

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